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Ag leadership to meet Monday in unique forum

Future of Farming

By Kirsten Stanley

Of The Daily Independent

GREENBO LAKE STATE RESORT PARK — Leaders from around the region will be part of a unique meeting focusing on the future of farming — the first of its kind in the state.

The Agricultural Development Leadership Training and Forum will be at 6:30 p.m. Monday at Greenbo Lake State Resort Park.

Local county extension agents and government officials, as well as members of the agricultural and economic development community, are invited to the forum, which includes three workshops.

The meeting is a way to get the farm community together to discuss important issues, such as crop diversification, said Kara Keeton, communications director for the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy. "People have expressed interest in having something like this for a while," Keeton said.

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Much of the forum will focus on ways to utilize the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund, money from cigarette manufacturers given to states that have lost a sizable amount of revenue because of cutbacks in the tobacco industry.

The fund was created by lawmakers in 2000 for projects that promote agricultural economic development.

"Traditionally, Eastern Kentucky has not submitted as many (grant) applications as other parts of the state," Keeton said. "We want to do what we can to help people understand the process."

The forum will follow the Farm Family Education Expo, an all-day series of workshops that begins at 8 a.m. at Greenbo. The expo will include workshops focusing on basic computer skills, exploring off-farm employment opportunities, financial management, developing a business plan and diversifying farm operations.

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